

## IN THE CLAIMS

Please note the introduction of new independent claims 19-20. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the present application:

1. – 7. (*Cancelled*).

8. (*Previously Presented*) A magnetic recording medium comprising:

a nonmagnetic substrate;

a perpendicular magnetic recording layer;

a soft magnetic laminate layer having a thickness of 500Å to 4000Å formed between the nonmagnetic substrate and the perpendicular magnetic medium, and including a first soft magnetic layer, and a second soft magnetic layer laminated in contact with said first soft magnetic layer and differing from said first soft magnetic layer in the crystal structure.

9. (*Original*) The magnetic recording medium according to claim 8, wherein each of said first and second soft magnetic layers contains as a main component at least one element selected from the group consisting of Fe, Co and Ni.

10. – 14. (*Cancelled*).

15. (*Previously Presented*) A magnetic recording apparatus comprising:

a magnetic recording medium having a nonmagnetic substrate, a perpendicular magnetic recording layer, a soft magnetic laminate layer having a thickness of 500Å to 4000Å formed between the nonmagnetic substrate and the perpendicular magnetic medium, and including a first soft magnetic layer, and a second soft magnetic layer laminated in contact with said first soft magnetic layer, and differing from said first soft magnetic layer in the crystal structure;

driving means supporting and rotating the perpendicular magnetic recording medium;

a magnetic head including an element for recording information in the perpendicular magnetic recording medium and another element for reading the recorded information; and

a carriage assembly supporting the magnetic head and making the magnetic head be movable relative to the magnetic recording medium.

16. (*Cancelled*).

17. (*Previously Presented*) A magnetic recording medium according to claim 8, wherein the value of the saturation magnetization per layer of said soft magnetic laminate layer is not larger than 90% of the saturation magnetization value under a bulk state.

18. (*Previously Presented*) A magnetic recording apparatus according to claim 15, wherein the value of the saturation magnetization per layer of said soft magnetic laminate layer is not larger than 90% of the saturation magnetization value under a bulk state.

19. (*New*) A magnetic recording medium comprising:  
a nonmagnetic substrate;  
a perpendicular magnetic recording layer;  
a soft magnetic laminate layer having a thickness of 500Å to 4000Å formed between the nonmagnetic substrate and the perpendicular magnetic medium,  
wherein the soft magnetic layer includes a first soft magnetic layer and a second soft magnetic layer laminated in contact with said first soft magnetic layer and differing from said first soft magnetic layer in the crystal structure, and  
wherein the value of the saturation magnetization per layer of said soft magnetic laminate layer is not larger than 90% of the saturation magnetization value under a bulk state.

20. (*New*) A magnetic recording apparatus comprising:

a magnetic recording medium having a nonmagnetic substrate, a perpendicular magnetic recording layer, a soft magnetic laminate layer having a thickness of 500Å to 4000Å formed between the nonmagnetic substrate and the perpendicular magnetic medium, and including a first soft magnetic layer, and a second soft magnetic layer laminated in contact with said first soft magnetic layer, and differing from said first soft magnetic layer in the crystal structure;

driving means supporting and rotating the perpendicular magnetic recording medium;

a magnetic head including an element for recording information in the perpendicular magnetic recording medium and another element for reading the recorded information; and

a carriage assembly supporting the magnetic head and making the magnetic head be movable relative to the magnetic recording medium,

wherein the value of the saturation magnetization per layer of said soft magnetic laminate layer is not larger than 90% of the saturation magnetization value under a bulk state.